UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FIFTIETH SESSION

*Official Records*

SPECIAL POLITICAL AND DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE (FOURTH COMMITTEE)
19th meeting
held on
Monday, 13 November 1995
at 10 a.m.
New York

# SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 19th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MUTHAURA (Kenya)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 86: COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of the publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-794, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.4/50/SR.19
14 December 1995
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: RUSSIAN

95-82212 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 86: COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS (A/49/875-S/1995/235, A/49/876, A/49/886-S/1995/276; A/50/137-S/1995/295, A/50/215-S/1995/475, A/50/230, A/50/254-S/1995/254, A/50/437, A/50/572, A/50/702, A/50/711-S/1995/911; A/C.4/50/L.10).

1. Mr. KARSGAARD (Canada), Vice-Chairman of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations, introducing the report of the Special Committee (A/50/230), said that the CORE of the report was part III, containing proposals, recommendations and conclusions. They were addressed to Member States, the Secretariat and other relevant organs of the United Nations, and their implementation should enhance the role and possibilities of the Organization in the area of peace-keeping.

2. Introducing the draft resolution on the comprehensive review of the whole question of peace-keeping operations in all their aspects (A/C.4/50/L.10), he said that the draft resolution endorsed those proposals, recommendations and conclusions. He drew attention to a technical error in the English text of the draft resolution: in paragraph 6, the word "suggestions" should be changed to "recommendations".

3. Mr. KITTANI (Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping Operations) said that the response of the Security Council and the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations to the Secretary-General's "Supplement to An Agenda for Peace" demonstrated a substantial consonance of views on the lessons to be drawn from the experience of peace-keeping operations.

4. Over the past year, an observer mission had been established in Tajikistan, a major operation had been deployed in Haiti, the operation in Angola had been expanded and the multidimensional operation in Mozambique had been successfully completed. In Somalia, from which United Nations peace-keepers had been withdrawn earlier in 1995, a political mission was still working to seek a settlement and, to the extent possible under the circumstances, humanitarian efforts were continuing. There were currently some 60,000 military and civilian personnel serving under the United Nations flag in 17 operations. Since the Member States had responded positively to the Secretary-General's proposals to streamline financial and administrative procedures, the Organization had improved its ability to respond to situations in the field. He expressed appreciation to Member States for their support, which he hoped would continue.

5. With regard to the staffing of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, over the past year the Office of Planning and Support had been strengthened, especially in the area of mission planning, field administration and logistics, and training, and the Military Adviser's Office and Office of Operations had also been modestly enhanced. The military officers made available by Member States on a short-term basis at no cost had been essential in enabling the Secretariat to fulfil its responsibilities. However, if the United Nations was to develop an experienced staff which could provide continuity, it was important

to preserve a core of posts through the inevitable fluctuations in the number and scope of operations.

6. Over the past year, the United Nations had conducted regional peace-keeping workshops in Europe and Latin America. Additional regional training workshops were planned for Asia and Africa in early 1996. In addition, the United Nations had recently established training assistance teams to assist interested countries in developing training programmes and training trainers. Training assistance teams were made up of experienced peace-keepers provided by Member States on an as-needed basis. On the basis of a pilot training programme organized by the Secretariat for the headquarters staff of the United Nations Mission in Haiti, a similar model had been used in September 1995 for the headquarters staff of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III). The results were encouraging.

7. He was pleased to report that the Lessons-Learned Unit was now operational in the Department of Peace-keeping Operations. In addition to conducting seminars, bringing together persons directly involved in various components of operations, the Unit would also coordinate the preparation and analysis of after-action reports and relevant research.

8. In the area of preparedness, the development of stand-by arrangements had continued. He encouraged all Member States to participate in that relatively new but promising system, the development of which would remain a priority. Additional progress had been made in Brindisi in developing peace-keeping start-up kits. The kits, which were assembled from assets derived from recently closed operations, contained the basic equipment and supplies for the non-military components of a peace-keeping operation until its own systems were operative.

9. In the previous spring, the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations had urged the Secretary-General to develop a rapidly deployable headquarters team. The plans for the implementation of that recommendation were well advanced. On a broader front, Member States had put forward in recent months detailed and constructive ideas for enhancing the capability of the United Nations to respond rapidly when necessary. The Secretariat looked forward to working with Member States in carrying forward those initiatives.

10. At the request of the Special Committee, the Secretary-General had made proposals to enhance the capacity for conflict prevention and peace-keeping in Africa (A/50/711-S/1995/911). The Secretariat counted on the support of Member States in making those ideas a reality.

11. Mr. PÉREZ-GRIFFO (Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union, Bulgaria, Malta and Romania, said that the 1995 draft resolution on the comprehensive review of the whole question of peace-keeping operations in all their aspects represented a step forward in raising the efficiency of the Committee's work and avoiding duplication of the discussions already held in the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations. The States Members of the European Union favoured enlarging the Committee and looked forward to a clear recommendation from the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations to the General Assembly.

12. The European Union provided more than one third of the contributions to peace-keeping operations in terms of military and police personnel, as well as logistic support. Its financial contribution was also approximately one third of the total. At a time when the peace-keeping operations of the United Nations were being criticized, the European Union wished to stress its commitment to those operations and to the principle of multilateralism which they embodied. In that connection, he regretted that the dire financial situation of the Organization had not improved and urged all States to pay their contributions in full, on time and without conditions.

13. The European Union attached particular importance to preventive diplomacy and peacemaking. Lessons learned from past experience highlighted the need to develop a consolidated, comprehensive approach which would take into consideration the principles of preventive diplomacy and peace-keeping, the need to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations and arrangements and the exigencies of post-conflict peace-building. In that connection, the European Union would actively participate in discussions in the Informal Open-Ended Working Group on An Agenda for Peace. Peace-keeping remained one of the key instruments available to the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security, and further efforts were required to strengthen the Organization's capacity in that area.

14. The European Union also attached particular importance to the recommendations of the Special Committee regarding the enhancement of the rapid reaction capability of the United Nations in the field of peace-keeping operations. In that context, it welcomed the proposal by the Department of Peace-Keeping Operations to establish a rapidly deployable headquarters team and actively supported the initiative on standby arrangements.

15. The States members of the European Union were actively searching for ways to enhance the preparedness of African countries and organizations to participate in conflict prevention and management in their own continent. The United Nations had a clear role to play in encouraging and facilitating training activities in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and the European Union welcomed the relevant proposals in the Secretary-General's report. The States members of the European Union would consider how best to support the Organization's efforts and proposals, including through the Trust Fund set up for that purpose.

16. The growing complexity of United Nations peace-keeping operations also highlighted the need for more effective coordination of the humanitarian, political and military components of United Nations peace-keeping missions. The relationship between humanitarian relief operations and peace-keeping operations was important and often difficult. In that connection, the European Union noted the report by the Joint Inspection Unit on the relationship between humanitarian assistance and peace-keeping operations.

17. The States members of the European Union also stressed the need for progress on other issues, such as the code of conduct for peace-keeping personnel, the drawing of lessons from previous peace-keeping operations, the better management of those operations, United Nations training assistance, the more effective use of civilian police components, the need to ensure the safety

and protection of United Nations personnel and a strong public information capacity within peace-keeping operations.

18. In conclusion, on behalf of the States members of the European Union, he paid tribute to all those who had given their lives in the service of the United Nations, as well as to those who were currently deployed in dangerous and difficult situations.

19. Mr. ZEGHIB (Algeria) said that peace-keeping operations, one of the Organization's main instruments for the maintenance of world peace and security, had played a useful role in preventing the escalation of conflicts and in promoting the settlement of disputes. Positive results had been achieved in Cambodia, Mozambique and El Salvador. His delegation noted with concern, however, that in certain regions peace-keeping operations had experienced setbacks and difficulties and come up against new problems in the political, military, financial and other fields.

20. In recent years, peace-keeping operations had acquired certain new features. Cases of involvement in the settlement of internal conflicts had increased in number; in addition to monitoring cease-fires and preventing the escalation of conflicts, peace-keeping operations were increasingly dealing with humanitarian relief and implementing peace accords, including monitoring the demobilization of forces, providing assistance in the maintenance of law and order and the repatriation of refugees and supervising elections. Peace-keeping operations were based on three main principles: consent of the parties concerned, neutrality and non-use of force, except for self-defence.

21. United Nations peace-keeping operations should be based primarily on the peaceful settlement of disputes through good offices, mediation and negotiation. Preventive diplomacy could play a positive role in removing tensions and defusing disputes. In its work in that area, however, the United Nations should respect the will of the Governments and peoples of the countries concerned and should not impose its own views on them. At the same time, preventive diplomacy measures were multifaceted: one aspect of preventive diplomacy was strict compliance with the principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and equality, mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence in international relations. Promotion of economic development in developing countries - an indispensable measure in the maintenance of peace and security - should also constitute an important element of preventive diplomacy.

22. In view of the current financial crisis faced by the United Nations, the payment of outstanding assessed contributions must be the first and most important step in ensuring the essential resources for peace-keeping. That should be followed by measures to strengthen the financial arrangements of peace-keeping operations. All assessed contributions should be paid in full and on time, so as to enable the United Nations to fulfil, without delay, its own obligations towards troop-contributing countries, by ensuring both adequate and timely reimbursement of their expenses. In view of the dramatic increase in peace-keeping operations and the broader participation in them of Member States, his delegation believed that the time had come to review the current membership of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations with a view to its

expansion, in order to reflect more adequately the concerns and interests of all troop-contributing countries.

23. Mr. VALLE (Brazil) said that peace-keeping operations should include impartial, multilateral and mediatory efforts aimed at settling disputes with the consent of all relevant parties and at their request. They were an instrument to assist relevant peacemaking efforts on the ground, and should never be considered an end in themselves. The lessons learned from recent experience in the area of peace-keeping operations, especially the phasing out of the operations in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, would certainly pave the way for a serious evaluation at the national level of all aspects related to peace-keeping. The Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations could play an important role in that process.

24. Today more than 80 countries were contributing to United Nations efforts in peace-keeping; however, the size and composition of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations had remained unchanged for many years and did not reflect the actual universe of troop-contributing countries. In view of the fact that participation in peace-keeping operations was becoming increasingly widespread, his delegation believed that Member States should review that activity. In the informal consultations conducted for the preparation of the draft resolution currently under consideration, the will of many delegations to expand the Special Committee had become quite clear.

25. The reasons for the serious financial situation of the Organization were the inability and unwillingness of some Member States to pay their dues in full, on time and without conditions. A large portion of the expenses of the Organization were derived from the unprecedented number of peace-keeping operations authorized by the Security Council, and the permanent members of the Security Council had a special responsibility for those decisions. His delegation firmly believed that the best way to provide a sound and long-lasting solution to the financial situation of the Organization was to observe the principle of equitable taxation with equitable representation.

26. Mr. DAGOH (Togo) said that the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations had afforded Member States an opportunity for solemnly reaffirming their commitment to strengthening peace by resolving conflicts through peaceful means. The report of the Secretary-General on peace-keeping operations provided an instructive overview of the extent of current United Nations operations. The nature and complexity of those operations were proof that the United Nations was making every effort to fulfil its primary role as a guarantor of international peace and security. His Government welcomed the many constructive measures that had enabled the Organization to become a vital factor in the settlement of internal and international conflicts, and expressed gratitude to those States and international organizations that had conducted or financed conferences and seminars on issues relating to peace-keeping and the peaceful settlement of conflicts. His delegation paid tribute to the participants in peace-keeping operations and staff of humanitarian organizations who had lost their lives to ensure that the noble ideals of the United Nations prevailed.

27. His delegation attached great importance to preventive diplomacy, welcomed the Secretary-General's proposals in that area and urged him to pursue that course of action, as it was capable of preventing disputes from escalating into armed conflicts. In that regard, his delegation believed that the General Assembly might play a more important role, in particular in the application of the provisions of Chapter VI of the Charter regarding the peaceful settlement of disputes, by actively participating in good offices and mediation efforts. The Organization had acquired significant experience in peace-keeping operations of which it could be proud.

28. One of the difficulties that the Organization faced stemmed from the significant reduction in assistance by Member States in the supply of military contingents, equipment and financial resources. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the measures set out in the Supplement to an Agenda for Peace and those adopted by the Secretary-General aimed at improving the coordination of activities in that area. His delegation was of the view that the international community should also make greater efforts at post-conflict peace-building by promoting the economic and social development of countries. In that regard, his delegation believed special attention should be devoted to Liberia, which had been devastated by a protracted war. Cooperation to rebuild that country would significantly further the success of the newly begun peace process in the interests of the entire West African subregion.

29. His delegation was concerned at the high number of casualties among United Nations staff members participating in peace-keeping operations. Considering the increasingly frequent instances of premeditated acts of aggression in areas of deployment, his delegation considered it essential, when planning peace-keeping operations, to arrange for effective media coverage, in order to provide greater understanding and more active support of United Nations activities through information and publicity campaigns. His delegation hoped that the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, would enter into force soon and that its application would put an end to such occurrences.

30. With regard to relations between the United Nations and regional organizations, his Government welcomed the intensified cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity. It was essential to promote such cooperation in the area of preventive diplomacy and peace-building in the interests of preserving peace and security at the regional level, as it was the basis for universal peace and security. Furthermore, subregional and regional organizations should participate more actively in the work of the early-warning system so as to bring about more intensive and effective prevention of conflicts.

31. Turning to the question of the activities of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations, he said that his delegation endorsed the Committee's recommendations on procedures for taking decisions on the various peace-keeping operations, their deployment and support. It wished in particular to emphasize that those operations should be carried out with respect for the principles of sovereignty, political independence and non-intervention in the internal affairs of Member States. They should be undertaken with the consent of the relevant parties and be based on a clearly defined mandate.

32. Mr. MEZZALAMA (Joint Inspection Unit), introducing the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), entitled "Investigation of the relationship between humanitarian assistance and peace-keeping operations" (A/50/572), said that the report dealt with the coordination of activities of United Nations organizations and agencies, through which the Organization simultaneously carried out humanitarian and peace-keeping operations. That interrelationship required the harmonization of the political, humanitarian, military and logistical endeavours of the United Nations. The main organizations and departments of the United Nations Secretariat, which were directly examined in the report, were the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Centre for Human Rights. Those entities and agencies had been collaborating in the performance of their tasks. Despite their different mandates, their various activities all shared the characteristics of neutrality, lack of political bias and impartiality. The aim of the report was to suggest ways and means to eliminate conflicts of interest, minimize overlaps and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the components of the operations.

33. Some of the recommendations in the report sought to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the different entities at Headquarters and in the field, which were directly or indirectly responsible for implementing the decisions of the Security Council on peace-keeping operations. Given the increasing role of non-governmental organizations in complex emergencies, the report underlined the need to pay special attention to their involvement in crises and recommended that their cooperation with other partners, in particular the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, should be improved. There was a need to review the mechanism for coordination at field level in complex emergencies.

34. Protection of and aid to the civilian population in a conflict were the primary aims of humanitarian assistance. In order for humanitarian assistance to be effective, the coordination structure needed to be clear and properly understood by the different United Nations organizations and agencies at Headquarters and field level. Coordination between the various Secretariat departments had been established, and the coordination machinery would soon be formalized. JIU supported that initiative. At field level, however, the picture was less transparent, and a clear set of principles needed to be defined and followed. Because of the complexity of emergencies, JIU was convinced that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, in accordance with his mandate, should be responsible for coordinating political, military and humanitarian operations. The Humanitarian Coordinator, the Resident Coordinator, the United Nations Force Commander and the High Commissioner for Human Rights should all report to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General without prejudice to their respective mandates.

35. The evident need to coordinate humanitarian activities in complex emergencies necessitated the presence of a Humanitarian Coordinator at field level. All agencies involved in complex emergencies had specific mandates and responsibilities. There was, however, no agency with the overall task of

harmonizing those activities. The issue had been discussed by the humanitarian agencies and an agreement had been reached on the need to establish the post of Humanitarian Coordinator. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee had elaborated appropriate terms of reference. JIU fully agreed with the decisions reached by the Standing Committee and with the tasks and responsibilities assigned to the Humanitarian Coordinator. However, in order to avoid duplication of work and waste of resources, the task of providing humanitarian assistance could be assigned to the United Nations Resident Coordinator responsible for coordinating all United Nations activities at field level.

36. The report also contained an analysis of the collective efforts of the United Nations system to improve the safety and security of United Nations personnel. Following the adoption of pertinent resolutions by the General Assembly and the Security Council, the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel had been adopted in December 1994. The report recommended that Member States should ratify the Convention and that the Secretary-General should report to the Assembly on the status of the Convention.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.